

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 09-16

☐ Policy ☒ Information

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Workforce Investment Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Regional Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Michael Taylor, Director
Department of Workforce Development

Date: April 3, 2009

Subject: Language Services Assistance for Limited English Proficiency Customers

Purpose: To provide language assistance guidelines to Local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Center Directors and other workforce investment partners with regard to the availability and provision of interpretation services to assure meaningful access to One-Stop Career Center Services for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers of the Commonwealth's One-Stop Career Center system.

Background: The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) is committed to improving the accessibility of One-Stop Career Center services and activities to LEP customers. To that end, these guidelines have been developed to assist Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers to obtain full access to, and meaningful and timely participation in programs, services and activities provided under the Workforce Investment Act or other state-funded efforts.

To assist local areas in meeting these language requirements, the Commonwealth has implemented a two-tiered model to expand language interpretation services available to Local One-Stop Career Center operators and their LEP customers:

Attachment A, Language Services Guidelines for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Customers outlines the two-tiered process in greater detail and is summarized as follows:

First: if needed interpreter skills are not immediately available for a particular individual within the career center, itself or from other local resources, staff

should seek assistance from bilingual state personnel listed in Attachment B who have indicated their availability to provide interpretation services.

Second: If appropriate interpreter services are not available in a timely manner utilizing either local resources or the state listing of bilingual staff, TeleInterpreters' Language Services should be contacted (1-800-822-5552).

NOTE: TeleInterpreters' Language Services is a private organization under contract to the Commonwealth for the provision of over-the-phone interpretation services. To assure continuing availability every consideration should be given to keeping all calls to TeleInterpreters brief and clearly focused on addressing an immediate need. Tips for cost-effective use of this service are provided in Attachment F.

Specific directions for accessing the over-the-phone TeleInterpreters service are more fully described in Attachment A (which also includes descriptions of Attachments B-F).

IMPORTANT: This service is available through June 30, 2009, *only*. It is the intent of DWD to make this over-the-phone language service available in FY 2010, as well. However, plans have not yet been finalized.

Action

Required: Please review the content of this issuance to assure the language assistance guidelines are followed and implemented in a manner to assure meaningful access by LEP customers to all workforce programs, services and activities.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Questions regarding these guidelines should be addressed to Marisa de la Paz, Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, Multilingual Services, Customer Outreach Department at mdelapaz@detma.org or 617-626-5471.